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ABSTRACT

This document contains eight papers in which the principals of eight U.S. and British postsecondary institutions describe the franchising negotiations and arrangements into which their schools have entered. Franchising arrangements at a wide variety of postsecondary institutions are discussed, including community colleges, polytechnics, further education (FE) colleges, and schools in a local education authority (LEA) that offer courses funded by Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) awards. Equally as diverse are the types of franchising arrangements described, including the establishment of a university center at a community college in the absence of a university in the immediate vicinity and an "up-and-down" arrangement in which one FE college developed franchising arrangements both with a polytechnic and with local schools. After a foreword by Susan Leather, the following papers are included: "Franchising Higher Education: The Rochester Community College Experience of Building a University Centre" (Geraldine Evans); "Negotiating Franchising Arrangements" (Raymond Smith); "BTEC in Schools: The Issues Involved" (Brian Cue); "BTEC in Schools: An LEA Scheme" (Barbara Molog); "BTEC in Schools: The Relationship between Schools and FE" (Robert Hughes); "Franchising Higher Education Activity at Polytechnic South West" (Ian Turnbridge); "Higher Education Franchising at Somerset College of Arts and Technology" (Richard Dimbleby); and "Franchising: Some Issues and Concerns" (Susan Leather). (MN)

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Franchising in Post-16 Education

Coombe Lodge Report

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The Staff College

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COOMBE LODGE REPORT
Volume 22 Number 9

FRANCHISING IN POST-16 EDUCATION

By Dr Geraldine Evans, Raymond Smith, Brian Cue, Barbara Molog, Robert Hughes, Dr Ian Tunbridge, and Richard Dimbleby

Editors: Susan Leather and Pippa Toogood

Coombe Lodge Reports

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FRANCHISING IN POST-16 EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

This Coombe Lodge Report arose from a seminar for principals of colleges which was held at The Staff College in April 1991. The presentations described franchising negotiations and arrangements in a variety of educational institutions, ranging from the setting up of a university centre at a community college in Minnesota, to schools in a London borough offering Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses.

The contributors described the reasons for embarking on franchising schemes, the arrangement and structure of their schemes, the benefits and disadvantages, the outcomes so far and the further developments they were anticipating.

All of the speakers felt that the advantages of the franchising arrangements they had entered into far outweighed any drawbacks and areas for concern. In addition, they could see the prospect of future developments building on the work initiated and established so far.

Geraldine Evans described how Rochester Community College set up its university centre to cater for the higher grade educational requirements for the necessary skilling of the population in that part of Minnesota, in the absence of a suitable university in the immediate vicinity.

Raymond Smith explained how and why West Kent College came to implement franchising arrangements both 'up and down' - that is to say, franchising higher education courses with Thames Polytechnic, and also BTEC courses with local schools.

Brian Cue, Barbara Molog and Robert Hughes each gave a presentation on the running of BTEC courses in schools, but from their respective, different viewpoints. Brian Cue described Bedfordshire County Council's development of a college link programme giving access to a one-year BTEC First course in schools, with plans to offer a two-year provision leading to A level or BTEC National, but starting with a joint first year programme of study (the so-called 'Y' model).

Barbara Molog detailed how Brent Local Education Authority (LEA) had set up and co-ordinated provision of a BTEC National Diploma across schools in the LEA. Robert Hughes, from one of the participating schools in Brent, raised and examined some of the issues involved in making franchising arrangements between schools and further education colleges.

Ian Tunbridge and Richard Dimbleby gave accounts of franchising arrangements with Polytechnic South West, based in Plymouth. Ian Tunbridge explained how the Polytechnic had decided to improve and safeguard access to higher education in the geographically large area of the southwest of England by developing as a regional polytechnic, in association with other institutions, to build up a regional network. Richard Dimbleby, from one of the further education colleges participating in the scheme, described how the association with Polytechnic South West had proved beneficial to his college, and helped to increase higher education provision in Somerset.

The seminar concluded with a discussion session in which the participants had the opportunity to raise issues of concern, and to try to clarify any questions still outstanding. This discussion is summarised in the final chapter of the Report.

Susan Leather
Publications Designer
The Staff College

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Brian Cue
Post-16 Development Officer
County Education Service, Bedfordshire County Council

Mr Cue comes from a schools background (teaching physics and chemistry, and head of department) and was also for three years Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) co-ordinator at John Bunyan Upper School. For the past four years he has been working firstly with the county Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) team, and latterly with the Inspection and Advisory Service. In this latter role he has worked with both schools and further education (FE) colleges, supporting all aspects of curriculum development related to 16 -19 provision. He is also Flexible Learning Co-ordinator for the FE sector.

Richard Dimbleby
Vice-Principal (Staffing and Curriculum)
Somerset College of Arts and Technology

Before taking up his post in Somerset, Mr Dimbleby worked in Hertfordshire and Surrey colleges and at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Winston, Salem. He is joint author of three books on communication and media studies and a member of the South West Access Validation Agency.

Geraldine Evans
President
Rochester Community College, Minnesota, USA

Dr Evans has been President of Rochester Community College (RCC) since 1982, and is a graduate of RCC where she received an Associate of

Arts Degree. Prior to this she was Director of Human Resources for the Minnesota community college system. She has also been a policy analyst for the Minnesota Department of Education and was an educational consultant for several years. She has teaching, counselling and administrative experience. She has been very active in civic and professional organisations. Dr Evans is a past director of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, and is currently serving as Secretary/Treasurer of both the Minnesota Association of Community and Technical Colleges and the North Central Association of Community and Junior Colleges. Dr Evans is well known regionally and nationally for her community college leadership. Her college ranks as one of the outstanding institutions in the nation.

Robert Hughes
Deputy Headteacher
Preston Manor High School, Brent Education Authority

Mr Hughes has been in his present post since 1983 and is also an Open University tutor. Preston Manor is a large comprehensive in North Brent with over 1,000 students on roll and with a sixth form of about 250. The school is regularly oversubscribed and has the largest business studies department in the Local Education Authority (LEA).

Barbara Molog
BTEC Co-ordinator
Brent Education Authority

Ms Molog was a deputy headteacher in a Brent community school before being seconded to the LEA for post-16 developmental work. She was initially concerned with one-year sixth form courses but has since assumed responsibility for Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) National work in business and finance across the LEA and for a credit transfer scheme.

Raymond Smith
Vice-Principal
West Kent College

Mr Smith is a chartered mechanical engineer with a Master's degree in management. He was head of a grade VI engineering department at South Kent College for 10 years and has been Vice-Principal at West Kent for

four years. The college has an annual enrolment of about 4,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) students of whom 2,500 are full-time.

Recently Mr Smith has been the FE representative on the team undertaking a major review of Work-Related Education and Training for Kent County Council. Many of the policies that are being pursued by West Kent College have been strongly influenced by the review's outcomes.

Dr Ian Tunbridge
Franchise and Access Manager
Continuing Education Department, Polytechnic South West

Dr Tunbridge is responsible to the Deputy Director (Academic) for development and management of franchise links and for Access to HE initiatives. His background is in geology and his doctorate is in sedimentology. He has worked in industry (Shell UK) and has been at Polytechnic South West (previously Plymouth Polytechnic) since 1978. From 1987 to 1990 he was seconded half-time to the Continuing Education Department, for access and franchise work, but during the 1990/91 academic session this post was made full-time.

FRANCHISING HIGHER EDUCATION:

THE ROCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE OF BUILDING A UNIVERSITY CENTRE

Dr Geraldine Evans
President
Rochester Community College, Minnesota, USA

INTRODUCTION

Describing the reasons behind the effort and the processes used to accomplish our goal of the evolution of a community college into a university centre is a real challenge. As can easily be imagined, the process of building our University Centre at Rochester was a long and difficult one. However, the sense of accomplishment I feel for the project and the wonderful results I see as the offerings of the Centre have an impact on the lives of the people in our area, inspire me to try to show the benefits of a co-ordinated college model and by so doing to aid other educators to be able to adapt the effort to the specific needs of their communities.

I believe it may be best to start by stating that this account is quite simply and plainly about **change**. I would like to share with you my favourite story about change:

> Two lovely young ladies were walking in a meadow and as they passed a pond they heard a voice speaking to them. As they searched for the source of the voice they approached a large, ugly, green frog whose piercing gaze forced them to draw nearer. The frog spoke to them and said, 'I am really a New York financier in captivity. If you hold me gently and kiss me, I will be transformed into my real self, marry you and we will live happily ever after.'
>
> The older and wiser of the two ladies snatched up the frog, locked him in her handbag and strolled on. The younger one said, 'but shouldn't we kiss the frog?'

> The older one replied in a wise and mentoring voice, 'a talking frog is worth a lot more than a New York financier these days.'

Our humour, our newspapers, our daily lives tell us we are in a new world. Change in every culture and in every setting is difficult, but unfortunately necessary. Our society in the United States, and in Minnesota, as I am sure is equally true in England, is going through massive change. And that change is occurring at a faster rate each year, or as some say, exponentially. Our hallowed halls of academia no longer fit the real world (if they ever did), and we are forced to look at new methods of meeting the needs of the environment we are in. There is a need for all of us to learn to live and work successfully with the wide variety of ethnic, religious, and racial groups we now have on the college scene, and the varying values they bring.

To discuss adequately the changes which we have accomplished at Rochester Community College and to help in understanding them, I need firstly to describe what we have done, and then why we thought the changes necessary. These are the same factors which need to be considered generally in thinking about change and how to cope with it. I believe these factors are:

- the structure of higher education in its setting;
- the demographic factors involved;
- the economic changes occurring; and
- the values of the country or community regarding the place of higher education in the lives of the people.

THE UNIVERSITY CENTRE CONCEPT

Put very simply, the University Centre at Rochester is a collection of colleges housed on one campus which was formerly Rochester Community College (RCC). What is unique about the Rochester University Centre is that it started with a two-year college and expanded on the basis of need studies to offer only the additional majors specifically needed in the Rochester community.

Historically, Rochester had been an agrarian market town when the area state university was founded. The college was placed in Winona, the trade

and manufacturing centre of the region at that time. However, the opening of the Mayo Clinic, one of the world's first group medical practices, in Rochester around the turn of the century, quickly changed the economy of the area. Rochester grew rapidly and steadily and soon surpassed Winona in size and prosperity. Visitors to the community demanded better transportation and an expansion of the hospitality industry. The Clinic and the supporting hospitals needed medical secretaries, laboratory technicians and nurses. The population grew and businesses expanded. The service economy which supported the Clinic demanded a trained work force. By the early 1900s, Rochester's economy had moved from an agrarian base to a knowledge base and had, for the most part, totally skipped the industrial age.

It is not surprising that the local public school board suggested that the district sponsor the establishment of a junior college. In 1915 one of the first junior colleges in the nation was opened to aid the community by providing the highly skilled service employees needed by the Mayo Medical Centre. The college offered additional general education to the area residents and concentrated on providing for local residents the first two years of bachelor's degree programmes. Students used their additional education in the local economy or transferred to the University of Minnesota to complete advanced degrees. The college soon began to offer two-year vocational programmes in business, medical and executive secretarial education, as well as in nursing and the health sciences. Rochester Junior College (which became Rochester Community College in 1972) grew quickly and remained the largest two-year college in the state until the mid-1970s.

In the mid-1950s, International Business Machines (IBM) opened a plant in Rochester. This further expanded the demand for a well-educated technical work force. Both Mayo and IBM continued to prosper and increase in size (in 1991, Mayo employs approximately 15,000 individuals and IBM 7,800. Both of these highly technical, knowledge-based industries hire large numbers of professionals, and even larger numbers of technical and well-trained service employees).

Rochester clearly needed additional higher education and as it became a world renowned medical centre and the site of a major IBM installation, the need for a university was evident. But during the period 1920-1980, politics were definitely against obtaining its own university. Rochester was a

Republican enclave in a predominantly Democratic state. There were several efforts to relieve the immediate pressure. Mayo worked with the University of Minnesota to provide medical education and eventually opened its own medical school and the Mayo School of Health Related Sciences in Rochester. Many of the two-year programmes in medical technology were, and still are, provided as joint programmes with Rochester Community College.

However, by the late 1970s the pressure for more upper division and graduate education had grown.

The cooperative project really started after a thorough study of our economy and the educational needs of the community (business and industrial needs as well as the personal desires of the citizens) and a realistic look at the options available. It became clear that the best option was to build on the base provided by the community college to organise a cooperative programme between RCC and the neighbouring Winona State University (WSU). WSU had been bringing course work to the Rochester area since the 1920s, and by the early 1980s had approximately 400 full-time equivalent (FTE) students there. The newness in the idea was to have a four-year college built on a '2 plus 2' model.

In the early 1980s, WSU was asked to bring upper division course work in the most needed majors to the community and we offered to house them on the community college campus. We agreed to provide the space, maintenance and custodial services, parking, food services, child care, audio-visual services, duplicating, bookstore, and library services on contract to the state college. This was of great benefit to WSU because it pays RCC only for the additional incremental costs of each of these operations rather than having to support base costs of each of the functions as it would if housed on a separate campus. In fact, the size of the WSU operation (now approximately 650 FTEs, serving 2200 different students each year) is not large enough to make the operation of any of these functions efficient. Essentially, WSU's task was only to bring the instruction, an offer which simplified matters, and made the state university more willing to consider the extension effort. In 1984, Rochester received the authorisation to spend $2.85 million to construct a building to house upper division course work offered by Winona State University in Rochester on the Rochester Community College campus. It was to be built, owned, and maintained by RCC.

After five years of operation we have added about 30,000 square feet of space to RCC and now provide 16 bachelor's degree majors and three master's degrees on campus. Programmes and course work are designed by the deans of the appropriate colleges at the Winona site and administered by a campus director housed in the Rochester facility. Although some faculty do travel from WSU (approximately 40 miles away) to teach, the WSU Rochester Centre now has 27 full-time resident faculty covering all the major subject areas needed by the local community. These are staff which were hired to live and teach in Rochester, but are state university faculty. A student services co-ordinator works with local students on counselling, advising, financial aid, and other student issues, and several WSU student service staff spend part of their time at the Rochester site. Many student and instructional support services are provided by RCC.

As the community identified additional needs which could not be met by the neighbouring state college, we asked the University of Minnesota (the major comprehensive university in the State) to bring us additional relevant master's and PhD programmes under the same format. They are now offering expanded programmes in the city and will bring these to the campus when our new facility will accommodate their needs. We provide support services for that operation also.

In the case of both WSU and the University of Minnesota, the instruction is always given by the entity offering the course. Since they give the degree, they cherish very closely the quality of the instruction, and it is their prerogative; it is really the only part that they own, as all the support services are contracted to the University Centre at Rochester.

In addition we are working with all of the higher education providers in the region (and by region, I mean within an 80 mile radius) to co-ordinate opportunities for the population we serve. We are working directly with all of the eight higher education providers in our community to study need, to do marketing and publicity, to avoid duplication, to expand offerings, to articulate course work and credit transfer, and to keep costs as low as possible. These institutions include Rochester Community College, a two-year technical college offering non-degree programmes, the area state university, the University of Minnesota, two small private religious colleges, a hospital school of practical nursing, and the Mayo Foundation. These eight educational entities advertise jointly in one view book for the community and also list their course offerings in one single publication for public convenience - see **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Rochester Higher Education Programmes

	One-year	Two-year	Four-year	Master's	Doctorate
St Mary's School of Practical Nursing	1 career programme				
Rochester Technical College	23 career programmes	8 career programmes			
Rochester Community College	5 career programmes	39 transfer programmes 17 technical programmes			
Minnesota Bible College		1 general education programme	6 ministry programmes		
Winona State Univ. Rochester Centre			14 undergraduate programmes	3 professional licensure programmes; 3 graduate programmes	
Univ. of Minnesota Rochester Centre			credit courses	6 graduate programmes; 2 cert. programmes; 2 partial cert. programmes; credit courses	
St Mary's College of Minnesota Rochester Centre				4 graduate programmes	
Mayo Foundation		3 career programmes 1 third-year programme	5 career programmes	2 graduate programmes 1 postbaccalaureate programme	1MD Programme; 1 PhD Programme in Biomedical Science (6 specialisations) Graduate Medical Education Postdoctoral Research

On the campus there is not the clearly marked segregation into certain areas used by particular institutions. The aim is to avoid this distinction. Indeed, this was one of the factors in the agreement with the legislature in getting the go-ahead for a new building. For the purposes of scheduling, we are one institution, and for the most part we all use all rooms (the exception being certain highly specialised functions). This efficiency was an important selling-point for the legislature.

THE STRUCTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MINNESOTA

Minnesota is an area slightly smaller than England, Scotland and Wales. Approximately four million people inhabit the state and over half of them live in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Rochester is 90 miles southeast. Our area has a population of approximately 100,000.

There are four public systems of higher education in Minnesota, and two private varieties of post-secondary education. The University of Minnesota is the one major comprehensive university in the state. It has a major campus in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area and four outstate campuses. About 55,000 students attend that institution. There are seven state universities, 21 community college locations, and 34 technical college sites. These are all public, tax supported institutions. Minnesota is almost unique in the United States in having two separate two-year college systems, whereas most states have merged these into the comprehensive community college. In addition, Minnesota has twelve private liberal arts colleges and numerous private trade schools offering very specialised certificates.

Except for the trade schools and the technical colleges, which have a tradition of offering instruction in block programmes, all of the other systems of higher education organise their course work into a system of credits for work completed. Colleges are scheduled on either a semester or quarter system and students may register for one or more courses, depending on their time, money, and motivation. A typical class load for a full-time student would be 15 credits per quarter, 45 credits per year, 90 for an associate degree, and 180 for a bachelor's degree.

All public institutions are encouraged to provide course work which articulates easily with programmes in other institutions. Students may begin their course work in the inexpensive community college and transfer later when they are more mature and able to handle the independence a

university setting requires. This credit system and the willingness of colleges to accept credits from other institutions is a fundamental necessity in establishing a university centre. Students must be able to build on work taken in one institution as they move on to another and must be able to be jointly enrolled in several institutions if this fits their needs.

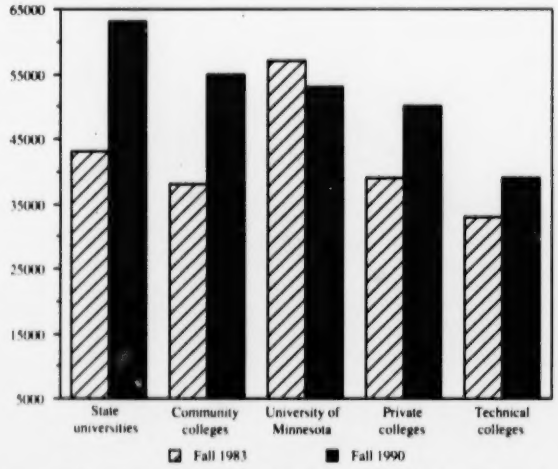
For example, the local technical college is one of the eight providers in our consortium, but is not part of our university centre operation. Until recently, the technical college offered its course work in block units, rather than in credits. Therefore, the remainder of the institutions found it difficult to transfer in and count the work of technical college students. The technical college has now moved to credit course work and we are working on the articulation of their programme and transfer agreements.

The community college system and the state university system have a statewide transfer agreement which allows any student who completes an associate of arts degree at a community college to transfer to a state university with junior (third year) status. RCC and the other universities and colleges within the University Centre provide even greater transferability for credits within our consortium.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

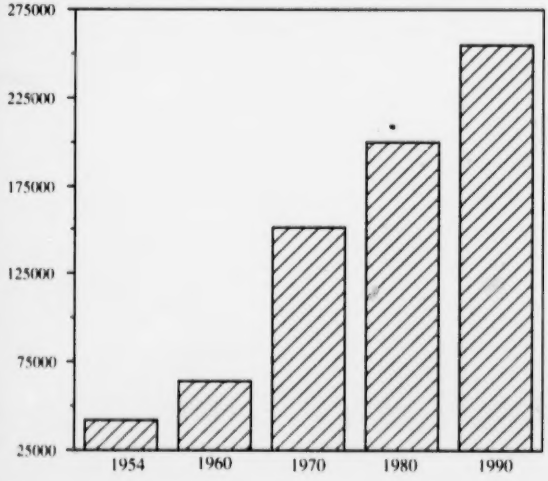
Figure 2 shows the enrolment in the various systems and **Figure 3** illustrates the growth in higher education enrolment since 1954. 90 per cent of all Minnesotans now finish high school and 90 per cent of these will go on to college within six years of completing high school. That makes 80 per cent of the traditional college-aged population of Minnesota going on to college, which is probably the highest rate in the nation.

Figure 2: Headcount enrolment rises



Source: Minnesota Higher Education Co-ordination Board

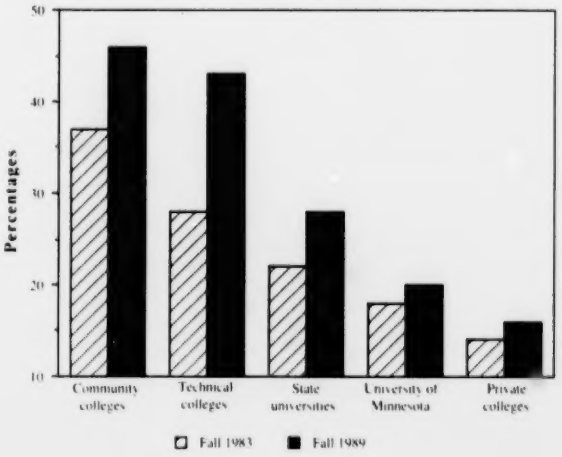
Figure 3: Increase in college attendance in Minnesota



Source: 1954 and 1960 Association of Minnesota Colleges
1970, 1980 and 1990 Minnesota Higher Education Co-ordination Board

4 shows that students are coming to college at an older age, and that ondingly, there has been tremendous growth of the community s because these are the institutions which are most accessible to the g adult. **Figure 5** shows that most students start college in the two stem of the community colleges and technical colleges but **Figure 6** hat bachelor's degrees are awarded about equally by the University nesota, the state universities, and the private colleges.

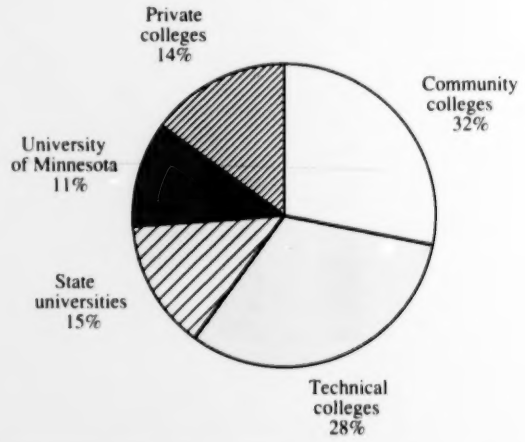
Figure 4: Increase in students aged 25+



Source: Minnesota Higher Education Co-ordination Board

These figures beg the question, 'if many of these individuals who are now attending community colleges need work beyond the two-year level, how will we accommodate them?' We have large numbers of individuals who know they need additional education. They have now decided to attend and can do so because the community and technical colleges are geographically close and very 'user friendly.' Here is a pertinent quotation from Carol B Aslanian, called, 'The other side of lifelong learning'.

Figure 5: Starting point for students



What we're seeing is the **other** side of lifelong learning. Educators love the phrase 'lifelong learning.' Minnesotans love it too.

We forget the **other** side of lifelong learning:

— we know that people will go to school even **after** they go to work. What we forget is that they will go to work **before** they go to school;

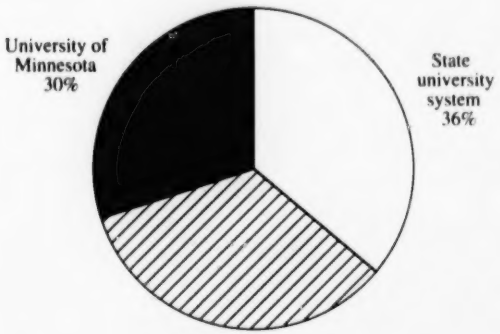
— we know they'll go to school even **after** they get married. We forget that they'll get married **before** they go to school;

— we know they'll go to school even **after** they have children. We forget that they'll have children **before** they go to school;

— we know they'll go to school even **after** they get old. We forget that they'll get old **before** they go to school.

(Post-secondary education in Minnesota: a commitment to quality, access and diversity, 1984)

Figure 6: Institutions awarding bachelor's degrees



In short, we're delighted that learning will be interwoven with life. We forget that life will be interwoven with learning. We're happy that learning will interrupt routine living. We're surprised that life will interrupt routine learning.

May all your wishes be granted. Is that a blessing? Or a curse? Well, educators, we have all wished for lifelong learning. And now our wish is being granted. We asked for learning to be interspersed with life. We are being given life interspersed with learning.

Professors have always urged their students to learn throughout their lives. Now, at last, students are responding. And now they want professors to respond. Teach us where we work, teach us in our homes, teach us at night, teach us on Sundays, drive 50 miles to teach us - and bring our textbooks in the trunk of your car. Give us access - to you. Make yourself accessible - to us.

THE REVOLUTION IN OUR ECONOMY

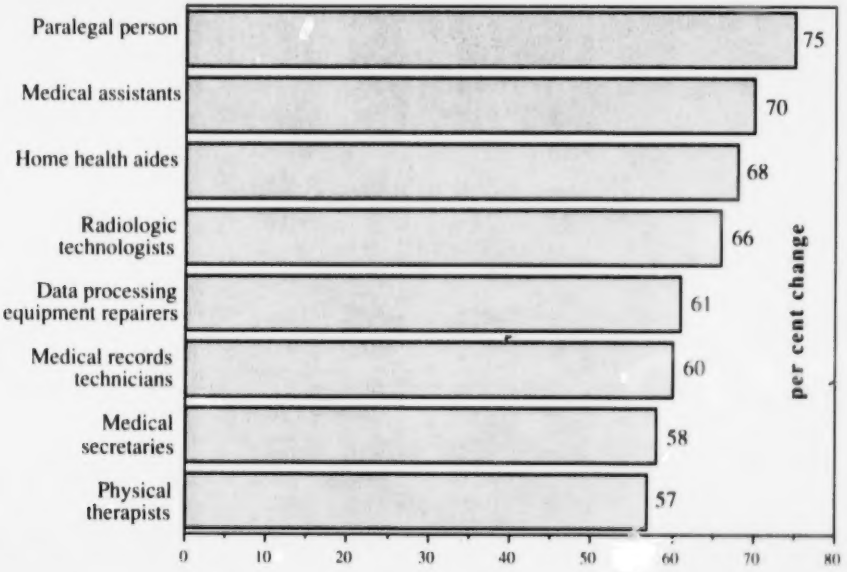
Our economies have moved from the agrarian base of the last century, through the industrial age, and on to what we now call the information age, or the age of technology. Nowhere has the impact of these changes been more obvious than in Minnesota during the last twenty years. Agriculture and lumbering supported Minnesotans almost totally until the turn of the century when mining of iron ore for the big steel mills and car industries of the east was added to our employment portfolio. However, by the mid 1970s all of these industries were waning. They have now been totally surpassed by banking, finance, insurance, the computer industry, and the health care field. Minnesota is now essentially a high tech economy and the people we need to handle our jobs need high levels of education.

As a state we fare slightly better than average in coping with this problem, but it is necessary to look at the national data on job trends and how well the population fits the economy of the future. A serious problem which faces our nation is that since 1968 approximately 20 per cent of American youth have not completed high school. The problem will be around for some time because 75 per cent of the current work force will still be working in the year 2000. It will be very hard for people to stay current with the needs of the jobs of the future because most employees of the near future will need to change jobs five to 11 times in their working life.

Figure 7 illustrates that the fastest growing occupations will be in areas served by two-year college students. None of the 20 fastest-growing job categories in the country are low-skill or no-skill occupations, but only three require four-year training. The other 17 require community college education. Of the thousands of jobs expected to be added to the economy in the next decade, only 14 per cent will require a four-year degree; 63 per cent will require community college training. I assume the British economy is experiencing the same concerns and has the same factors operating.

Those of us who work in education and study the needs of the labour force know that the time is near when 85 to 90 per cent of the population will need knowledge and skills at the level of those offered in our two-year degree programmes. This news is good and bad. It says essentially that for the near future, large numbers of individuals who need new job skills can obtain them at their local two-year colleges. The labour economists also tell us that every level of occupation will need updating. Those

Figure 7: Fastest growing occupations 1988 - 2000



Source: Bureau of labour statistics

professionals (e.g. doctors, lawyers, engineers), already at higher degree levels desperately need additional updating of their skills and advanced work. IBM likes to say that the half life of an engineer is five years, meaning that a professional, without retraining, will be totally useless in ten years. But these people have homes, families, and jobs. How will they travel to the locations of the state universities and live in dormitories to obtain these skills?

THE VALUES WHICH DRIVE THE CHANGE

Minnesota is populated by northern European immigrants. Education has always been valued. It has been said that when these immigrants first came to Minnesota, they built their homes, then their churches, and then their schools. Then they went back and fixed up their homes.

Minnesotans use education, including higher education, not only for job training, but for personal enrichment and to improve their family life, their consumer competency and their citizenship. For further information, see Parnell's book **The neglected majority**, which illustrates the many modern life roles which demand higher education today. We feel all of these uses of higher education are beneficial and again much of this education is within the realm of the two-year college.

Obviously, it is not possible to build a comprehensive university within commuting distance of every citizen. **We needed to be creative!**

THE REALITY

The reality of the demographics, the current educational setting, the demands of a changing economy, and the high value placed on education, led us in Rochester to the concept of the University Centre.

There was no doubt in anyone's mind that the most vital institution for our high tech community was Rochester Community College. It provided a ready supply of nurses, engineering technicians, business, retail, and accounting employees. It also gave large numbers of individuals their first two years of a four-year programme and provided large numbers of others with improved general education skills.

But in order for the economies of the Mayo Clinic and IBM to flourish as well as the business community at large, Rochester needed more and that 'more' had to come from upper division institutions. There was no real hope of building a new university, so the logic was to grow our own. IBM and Mayo were obviously important in terms of providing assistance and using their considerable power to help with initial research, lobbying and funding. The Chamber of Commerce in Rochester also readily understood that the economy of the city would be stifled unless more education could be brought to the people, and was a prime supporter in the impetus for, and establishment of, the University Centre.

One matter to be considered in having set up such a new institution, was that of academic status. This was more of a problem at first. Suitable publicity can help in attempting to overcome prejudice. Clearly, the University of Minnesota had the greatest amount of status within the state, followed by a pecking order of other institutions with private trade schools at the bottom, and the technical and community colleges ranked in a lowly position also. Inevitably, there is still prejudice (the joke is to say that we have planted the ivy and eventually we will look like Harvard). But it is also a question of time, and having enough people going through the system and saying that it is OK. Now we have a lot of graduates who are starting to say that they got a good education, it worked well, they could live at home, it was inexpensive etc.

Conversely, people who went away to private schools etc, are coming back because it was too expensive or an unpleasant experience in one way or another, and they are then saying, 'we had this great thing at home, why are we going away?'

Although it is largely a question of time and establishing a reputation, the University Centre will never have the status of a Harvard or even the University of Minnesota. But the over-riding importance is for the many place-bound people now given the opportunity of local provision.

There is also the question of what the University Centre at Rochester gains, as a franchising centre. I believe that we will gain students because instead of going off to some other place to start out with, they will start with us. There is also the altruism of the educator, if you like. As a local of the Rochester area, I realised how inconvenient and expensive it was not to

have a home college, and I also became very concerned about the fact that there were all these talented students not able to go on, so we began working on this. If such students cannot continue, then it is a loss to all of us, so society and the local economy benefit by having these students able to obtain more.

The Centre benefits greatly from the fact that as a consortium of providers we do have a bigger facility, and a better library, food service, child care provision and other such resources than would be possible if we were our own institution all by ourselves. This obviously benefits the students also.

The University Centre at Rochester is a hybrid of higher education. We think it a wonderful model of efficiency and cooperation.

We now have many graduates of bachelor's and master's degree programmes and the demand grows. This community loves the innovative model which has become a pilot project in experimental delivery of higher education for the state.

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NEGOTIATING FRANCHISING ARRANGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the scheme to implement franchising arrangements between West Kent College and Thames Polytechnic, as well as between West Kent College and four local schools.

West Kent College serves an area centred on the towns of Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. In addition to the local towns of the immediate catchment area, road and rail links enable students to commute from further afield in Kent, as well as from Sussex, Surrey and some London Boroughs. The College provides education and training in over 300 courses for over 6000 students, nearly half of whom attend full-time.

THE REASONS FOR FRANCHISING

Essentially, there are three main reasons why West Kent College has gone into partnership with other educational institutions. The first reason was philosophical. I am a product of further education (FE) in my own education and training; I have worked in FE for 25 years and I believe in the importance of vocational education. The ideas behind the scheme stemmed from a visit I undertook with The Staff College to Kentucky University in 1990. I was very impressed with the set-up whereby the University operates with a group of satellite community colleges, who in turn operate with high schools. There is one strategic plan for the whole of Kentucky. This seemed to be a very rational way of operating, and I was determined to implement an equivalent scheme in Kent.

Contacting universities and polytechnics, I had much immediate response from the polytechnics. After discussions with various directors of

polytechnics, it was decided to go into partnership with Thames Polytechnic, partly because of its convenient location in southeast London and partly because there was a very good match between their and our provision.

The second reason was political in respect of both the national and local situation. National initiatives included those by the Department of Employment, as set out in their reports **Employment for the 1990s** and **1990s: the skills decade**, and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) report **Towards a skills revolution**.

In Kent the Local Education Authority (LEA) had decided to establish a Work-Related Education and Training (WRET) Review. I was the FE representative on the review team, and it so happened that the West Kent College Principal was on the Chief Officer's Steering Group. This meant that by dint of hard fighting, we were able to have a major influence on the outcomes of the WRET Review.

The political pressures inherent in the Review did afford an opportunity to have a more rational and coherent look at the education system in Kent, and one of the issues to emerge was the inefficiency of having many small sixth forms doing mainly A level work, which was, furthermore, inappropriate for many of the students. Central to all policy initiatives, including the Review, was the need to improve participation rates. But West Kent College was already full. Student numbers were 4000 full-time equivalents (FTEs) of whom nearly 3000 were full-time (with around 600 students taking A levels). Accommodation utilisation rates during the day were already the highest in the county, and with the proposal to link up with Thames Polytechnic and have higher education (HE) courses coming into the College, there was not the scope for expansion.

Hence expediency was the third and perhaps the most important reason for undertaking franchising arrangements, to include the school sector.

THE FRANCHISING STRUCTURE

Naturally, there was disquiet within the College that work developed over a number of years would be handed over to the schools in favour of uncertain developments at HE level. It was from there that we started looking at the structure - what it should be, and how we were going to achieve it.

Figure 1: Structure of education in Kent

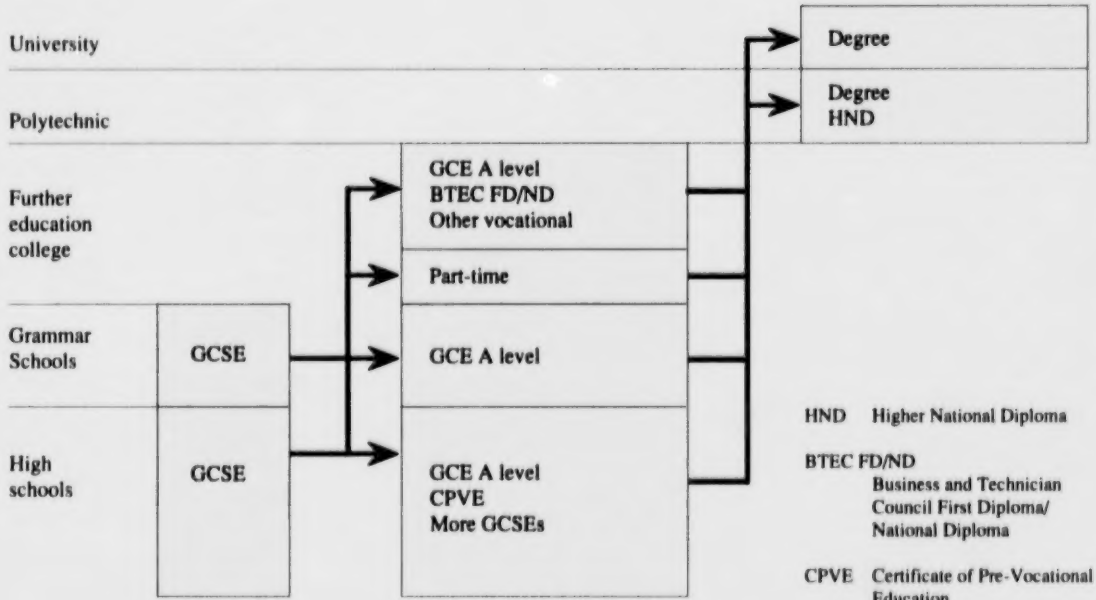

Figure 2: Structure of education under franchising arrangements

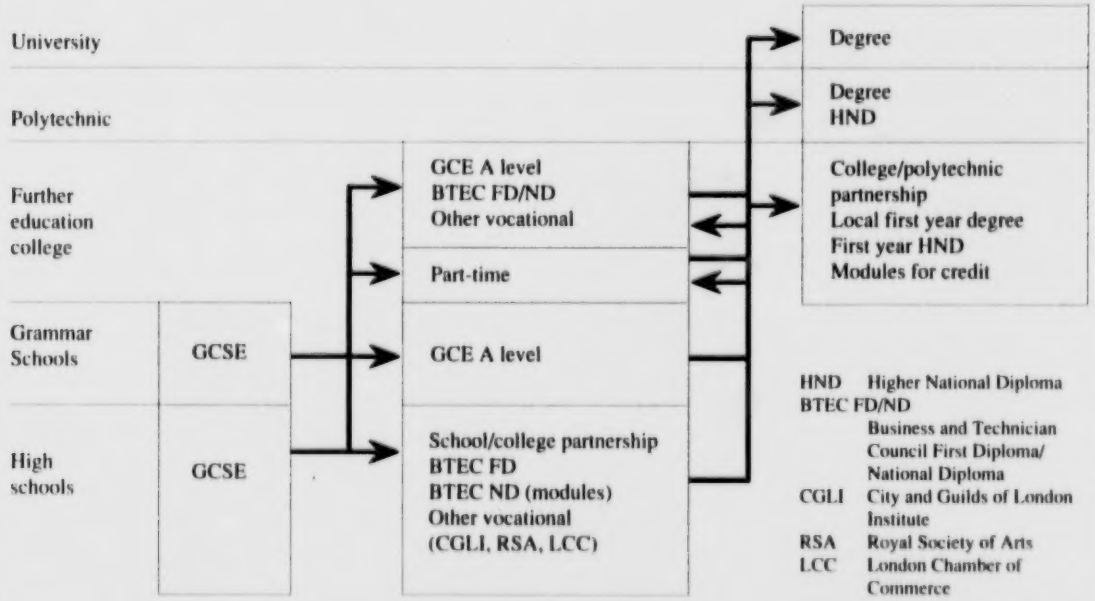

Figure 1 shows the general structure of education in Kent. It still includes grammar schools with a very academic curriculum, in addition to high schools and comprehensives.

Figure 2 shows the structure under franchising arrangements. What is intended is an educational continuum of vocational opportunities, from the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) First Diploma to a degree. Under these arrangements, West Kent College is an associate college of Thames Polytechnic, and the four schools involved are associate schools.

The continuum starts with associate schools and the BTEC First Diplomas. Once those are established, we intend to offer BTEC National Diplomas or modules from BTEC Nationals as well. Further along the continuum, the College is running two Higher National Diplomas (HND) from September 1991 with Thames Polytechnic, and from 1992 we hope to be offering a range of other HE courses including Diploma HEs.

THE AIMS OF THE SCHOOL/COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP

The intentions are to:

- facilitate an increase in participation rates;
- provide schools with a realistic alternative to A levels and Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE);
- promote the growth of work-related education and training;
- optimise the use of school (and the Authority's) resources;
- break down barriers to progression by providing a coherent system of ladders and transfer points between school, College, employment and HE;
- encourage collaboration and avoid wasteful competition and duplication of resources;
- make specialist resources (staff, equipment and accommodation) available to schools; and

— break down barriers to the transfer of teaching staff between schools and the College.

THE PILOT SCHEME

It was decided to operate a pilot scheme with specific objectives, namely to:

— deliver BTEC First Diplomas in a range of subject options in selected schools;

— ensure appropriate amendments to existing BTEC validations are approved;

— devise a common contractual framework for franchising courses to schools;

— implement a staff development programme for College and schools staff;

— assist schools with marketing and recruitment via a co-ordinated publicity strategy;

— assist schools with delivery including provision of specialist resources (staff, equipment, accommodation);

— develop procedures for quality control through course review and evaluation; and

— disseminate information to non-participating schools and develop a plan to broaden the scheme.

After consultation with the schools, it was decided that in the pilot year we would start with BTEC First Diplomas in Business and Finance, Caring, Information Technology, and Science, as some of the more resource intensive BTEC courses are not appropriate for schools at this stage. A range of subjects was offered right from the pilot stage, because we did not want single option BTEC schools.

Formal documentation that was drafted for the pilot scheme and subsequently finalised includes a Memorandum of Association, and a

Schedule of Arrangements. The Memorandum of Association, signed by the Principal of West Kent College and the head of the associate school, exactly mirrors the one that the College has with Thames Polytechnic. The Memorandum lists the objectives of the scheme and the terms of agreement, while the Schedule of Arrangements records the means and objectives whereby the collaboration is to be implemented and monitored. These documents are intended to demonstrate the commitment of both parties.

FUNDING

The schools are funded under the terms of the Kent Delegation Scheme as follows. For a course, the allocation per student is the unit of resource multiplied by the mode conversion factor multiplied by the weighting factor. The unit of resource in Kent is £1790. This is multiplied by 25 hours, the standard hours for a BTEC course in Kent. This is then divided by 23, the standard hours for a full-time course in Kent. That figure is multiplied by the weighting factor for, say, Business and Finance which is 1.1. That comes to just over £2000 per student, and so for a group of 16 the school is getting something in excess of £34,000, which they find attractive. Expressed as a formula, the calculation is as follows:

Allocation per student

$$= \quad UR \times MC \times WF$$

for BTEC First Diploma Business and Finance

$$= \quad 1790 \times \frac{25}{23} \times 1.1$$

$$= \quad £2140 \text{ (£34,240 for group of 16)}$$

The College keeps 20 per cent of that per student, which is £428, to cover costs for moderation, quality control and other services. BTEC will not moderate courses in schools. Since the course is under the College's validation, we are responsible to BTEC for the moderation of it. In the same way, the Polytechnic is responsible for the validation and moderation of the courses delivered for them by the College.

If the school requires additional resources, these are purchased from the College at predetermined rates, which are the same as those used within the College, where the five teaching divisions can buy services from each other. The rates are calculated on the same basis as that for the delegation scheme, using the same weighting factors.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organisational structure was set up for the school scheme as follows. There was a steering group, comprising the author, headteachers of the participating schools, College divisional directors (i.e. heads of department) and a schools liaison manager. Then for each of the four subject areas there was a working group (Business and Finance, Caring, Information Technology and Science). The working groups were made up of College and school representatives, and chaired by the school's liaison manager. Their responsibilities were to achieve the validation for each of the subject areas, plan the courses and see through their implementation.

ISSUES

A number of issues to be resolved were identified by the steering group. These were as follows:

- quality procedures;
- work experience arrangements;
- examination and registration procedures;
- recruitment and enrolment procedures;
- in-service training for staff; and
- joint timetabling.

Inevitably, there have been certain tensions in setting up such a new scheme, and one of these relates to work experience arrangements. The College's work experience placements and contacts are being used with the schools, which has caused some stress with staff who have spent much time and effort in getting those placements.

There is a potential difficulty regarding recruitment, in that at present we are in direct competition with schools because in Kent there are currently two separately funded systems for post-16 education, one for FE and one

for schools. There is a danger that we might split the market by each recruiting small numbers of students, leading to a situation whereby in order to maintain viable groups, some students who have opted to go to College rather than stay on at school may have to return to school for their course. The reason for this is that the market segment we are aiming for in our franchising is essentially the youngsters who have decided to stay on at school. The staying-on rate is already high, though many students have been taking inappropriate courses. But in making parallel, co-operative arrangements, we hope to be able to avoid such a circumstance.

For the publicity materials, we have made it clear to the schools that there must be standardisation in terms of the way they promote the courses. Each school obviously has its logo on its publicity, and in the same way that College publicity now says 'in association with Thames Polytechnic', the schools literature must state 'in association with West Kent College'. That way, the parents and students are aware that it is a joint programme.

There is dual enrolment with students being enrolled in both the school and the College. They are actually College students and this is important because it relates to the funding method. Similarly, students at West Kent College undertaking HE work are enrolled in both the College and Thames Polytechnic.

An important issue has been that of in-service training, particularly for schools staff. A staff development programme was organised and timetabled for 1991 to cover the following areas:

- teaching and learning strategies;
- common skills;
- assignment writing;
- assessment;
- team building;
- review and evaluation; and
- profiling and administrative procedures.

The schools have had to buy this programme from the College out of their funding.

It is important for BTEC validation that staff have relevant experience, so that the subject areas for the schools programme were chosen to reflect this, as far as was possible. In the early stages, a significant proportion of the

teaching will be done by College staff. Correspondingly, for the HND courses being offered in conjunction with the Polytechnic, we have chosen areas where we have Higher National Certificate (HNC) experience in order to facilitate validation. Polytechnic staff will initially be assisting us to deliver the HND courses.

OUTCOMES

As a result of all the discussions and negotiations, we have agreed contracts with four schools to deliver a total of six BTEC First Diplomas, which started in September 1991. Also from that date, the College is running two HNDs in partnership with Thames Polytechnic. In September 1991, the College recruited 27 students on an HND in Building Studies, 24 students on an HND in Business Studies, and 71 students from four schools on BTEC First Diplomas in Business/Finance, Caring and Information Technology.

The county WRET Review body took note of and accepted our proposals that there should be a strategic plan for all 16+ education, with a single budget rather than two separate ones for schools and FE as at present, along with the suggestion that there should be a strategic planning body made up of representatives from schools, colleges, employers and the local Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). Written into the Review policy statement is the following:

> Franchising, which involves establishing partnership agreements between a College and a higher education institution and a network of local schools, is seen as a prime means of breaking down barriers to progression by providing a coherent system of ladders and transfer points between school, College, employment and HE.

Two other colleges in Kent are now in the process of negotiating contracts with local schools. The County has agreed curriculum development funding for all three colleges to facilitate the development of franchising.

Following the White Paper **Education and training for the 21st century**, the College has negotiated a franchising deal with the local Adult Education Service for the provision of vocational courses.

For September 1992 it is planned, in addition to the courses already detailed, to offer an HND in Motor Vehicle Management, an HND in Caring and a Diploma HE in Journalism. On the schools side there has been tremendous interest and it is planned next year to offer 408 places to 18 schools.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

It is envisaged that once the BTEC First Diploma is established, we will consider offering BTEC National Diplomas in schools - the first year at any rate. Once schools become fully involved in this type of vocational provision - and the intention is not to restrict operations to BTEC courses only - they are likely to want more. Meanwhile, the College may be shifting its emphasis more into the HE area. Given current developments in student funding, there is going to be a big increase in the requirement for HE to be provided locally - this is part of our motivation.

In the commuter area served by West Kent College, there is a large demand for degrees on a modular basis. One reason for choosing Thames Polytechnic in partnership was that they were already developing credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) schemes for which we should have a considerable market. The Polytechnic could also assist us in the development of professional level courses for which we do not presently cater.

Evidently, once association arrangements are proposed, it is possible to see continuing scope for a whole range of future developments.

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BTEC IN SCHOOLS: THE ISSUES INVOLVED

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This chapter raises some of the issues surrounding the use of Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) awards, both the First and the National, in school sixth forms.

The premise taken is that it is inevitable that schools will at least attempt to go down this route, but this is not to pass any value judgement on the rights and wrongs of such a decision.

What seems to be emerging at this time is that while there are attractions for schools in offering BTEC programmes, relatively few will be able to do so without the assistance of a local further education (FE) college. Typically, schools will lack the expertise or the facilities to offer some vocational units, and many will lack the close links with employers necessary to accredit workplace performance.

Such arrangements, i.e. schools and colleges jointly offering programmes of study based on BTEC awards, can operate to the benefit of students, schools and local FE providers if, and it is a big if, issues of quality and funding are resolved by the institutions concerned.

Underpinning this point is the belief that the education and training system of any district, however defined, should be capable of offering all young people a provision guaranteeing quality, that is to say, an appropriate balance of depth of study and breadth of experience, with a built-in progression of learning. These features can and should be offered, whatever the institutional structure and the nature of the relationship between the institutions.

If this is to be achieved, post-16 provider institutions will need to collaborate to ensure that no artificial barriers are put in the way of meeting evolving and individual needs.

THE BEDFORDSHIRE EXPERIENCE

In the majority of the county there are upper schools catering for the 13-18 age group (years eight to thirteen in national curriculum-speak). In only one area of the county, Luton, is there a sixth form college. There are also three colleges of further education serving the main population centres of Bedford, Dunstable and Luton. There are currently no plans to undertake any restructuring with the possible exception of that within Luton.

At the end of the period of compulsory education, a young person wishing to stay on in full-time provision has the option of remaining in their existing upper school (except of course in Luton where they will need to transfer to the sixth form college to remain in the school sector), or to transfer to one of the local colleges. The overall participation rates at 16+ are 51% remaining in schools and a further 15% attending college full-time.

Surveys carried out locally suggest that a variety of issues influences the decision a young person (or their parents) makes in selecting an appropriate course at 16+. These include:

- the wish to remain in a known, secure environment;
- the perceived difference in status between schools and colleges (which includes the perceived difference in status between academic and vocational courses);
- the wish to transfer to an advanced level course after one year;
- ease of transport arrangements to schools;
- peer group pressures.

What is clear from these influences is that a significant number of young people make a choice of post-16 course based on an institutional preference, rather than a course preference. Where a course preference has been expressed, it is clear that a significant number of young people make that decision against a background of ignorance and prejudice. Ignorance because they do not know what type of teaching, learning and assessment is involved on either A level, AS level or vocational programmes. Prejudice, because of the deep seated bias, cultural in origin, against the vocational route.

If students are making decisions without full consideration of all the perspectives, the system of education and training should be flexible

enough to ensure, as far as possible, that students do not lose out - they are often not equipped to take such decisions at that age.

NON-ADVANCED, ONE-YEAR PROVISION

At present, Bedfordshire has well over 500 students from the 20 upper schools attending college to access units from the BTEC First. They receive the BTEC Certificate of Achievement at the end of the year.

Prior to the start of the current SCIL (School College Integrated Link) Programme, about half the upper schools offered the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) to all one-year students, about a quarter offered the CPVE to lower achievers and a re-sit programme to the other students, and the remaining quarter offered a re-sit programme only. Some of the CPVE Provision was linked to a local college, but this was not proving at all successful due, in part, to the low status of CPVE in the college.

All the CPVE schemes were suffering from an inadequately defined progression route for 17+ students - CPVE students were going on to BTEC First at college, and then on to BTEC National courses. For anyone who has followed the CPVE debates, this type of situation will no doubt be very familiar.

With the advent of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) (Bedfordshire was one of the original pilot authorities) where the emphasis was placed on a progression of learning throughout the 14-19 phase, CPVE came under pressure. Bedfordshire's solution, a pragmatic response to all the pressures detailed, was to offer students wishing to return to the school sector for a one-year course access to the BTEC First through a college link programme.

Such a provision, linking schools and colleges, and which is built around the BTEC First, has many advantages including the following:

— it offers a progression of learning post-16, since it contains a specific vocational focus, and, because of the day spent at college, a breadth of experience;

— it offers a progression of learning post-17, as it is soon to be linked to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)

levels 1 and 2. Progression from the one-year programme on to the BTEC National can now be mapped;

— the time spent in college throughout the year, together with an extra year's maturity, helps increase progression rates post-17, with more students going from the one-year school programme on to a further full-time course at college;

— encouraging schools and colleges to work more closely together improves mutual understanding and knowledge, leading to positive spin-offs in other directions.

If students are going to be attracted back into school sixth forms with BTEC First as an appropriate curriculum for the one year client group, the issue becomes one of how to offer the programme. The obvious solution is for a school, or schools, to link with an approved BTEC centre - a college of FE - buying in the expertise or facilities they lack themselves. This is a possible option under Local Management of Schools (LMS).

It was recognised from the start of the scheme that when LMS commenced, schools would have to assume the responsibility for paying for the programme from their delegated budgets. It was also recognised that this would entail a significant shift in culture, so the Local Education Authority (LEA) was to pump prime the initiative for the first two years of its operation, with schools assuming the full cost over the following three-year period as the LEA subsidy was phased out. Bedfordshire is now at a stage where schools will be paying about £160 per student for the link programme in the 1991/92 academic year.

A significant issue to be addressed is the share of the programme to be borne by the college; current thinking suggests that schools should end up paying the full cost for the programme (estimated at £270) and receive some form of rebate - perhaps £80 - for students who return to college after the one-year programme.

TWO-YEAR PROVISION

Some students have a particular talent in one area such as modern languages (in Bedfordshire there are large communities from many European countries such as Italy and Poland), or in, say, the creative and performing arts. Such students might benefit from a mixed model of

academic and vocational awards - A levels in one or two modern languages and BTEC National modules in Business Studies for example, or an A level in Art and Design and then a BTEC National award in the Performing Arts. Such a mixed model, of obvious advantage to the individual, requires joint delivery between school and college. The student might be on the school's register, and the school receive the income for them, but the school then pays a college to deliver part of the programme. This is one example of joint delivery. Another area where such mixed provision could be successful is that of students wishing to undertake A/AS levels only.

The status of A/AS levels attracts post-16 students, and their parents, even though the students' interests might be better served by starting other programmes. Teaching and learning methods and, perhaps most importantly, assessment strategies employed on A/AS courses (which can be so different to those employed on GCSE Programmes), can prove to be a de-motivating factor.

The success of GCSE in raising attainments has resulted in more students having the paper qualifications to start an A level programme. Bedfordshire is therefore looking to offer students within this category enhanced flexibility, again by encouraging institutions to collaborate to achieve specific curricular goals. Primary attention at this time is being focused on the development of a so-called 'Y' model, linking A level and BTEC National in appropriate curriculum areas such as business studies, science and performing arts. Students would not be required to make a decision between A level or BTEC National at 16. They would enter on to a programme which contained elements of both, and would study on this common programme for perhaps two terms, perhaps one year. The difference in assessment strategies for A levels and BTEC National make an eventual divergence of route inevitable. But students starting an A level programme would have the opportunity to switch to a BTEC National programme after this period of time taking with them credit for attainment up to the point of transfer.

The School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC) see no problems with this model, but would like to see changes in teaching and delivery styles employed in A level teaching, with BTEC having an influence on that if the courses are delivered in parallel.

To devise such a programme, which is still in the planning stage requires active collaboration between schools and colleges. There are potential

benefits for all parties. For students it offers increased flexibility and the opportunity to sample both academic and vocational learning. For schools it offers the opportunity to recruit additional students post-16, and for colleges the opportunity to recruit additional students post-17, since a significant proportion will continue with the vocational programmes.

In setting up such a scheme there will, inevitably, be elements of the joint programme for which schools will require support from local FE providers.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the following are the key issues regarding the franchising of courses from schools into the FE sector (i.e. a school buying in expertise and/or facilities from FE):

- it increases the overall participation rates since a coherent curriculum package can be promoted by both schools and colleges;
- it can offer young people built-in progression of learning;
- it can offer one-year students an additional year of security, but with the advantages of breadth of experience and guaranteed progression rights post-17;
- it can offer two-year students additional flexibility, with the opportunity to transfer from an appropriate academic programme on to a vocational programme without loss of time;
- such arrangements might be regarded as a mechanism for keeping more students in school sixth forms;
- the financial implications of franchising - a school paying another provider for 'services rendered' - can be difficult to establish. It is inevitable that colleges will want to charge more than schools will want to pay;
- the culture clash between schools and colleges - still very real despite all the changes - makes it hard to agree definitions of quality.

BTEC IN SCHOOLS : AN LEA SCHEME

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Offering Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses in schools is unusual, offering them in conjunction with A/AS levels, co-ordinated across a Local Education Authority (LEA) even more so. This is what Brent have done with their BTEC National Diploma in Business and Finance. How has this been set up and managed; how have issues such as quality control been managed? This chapter attempts to answer a few of these questions.

WHY DEVELOP AN LEA-WIDE SCHEME?

Put very simply, there was a need to retain students. Brent was losing many 16+ students to neighbouring authorities with a consequent loss of approximately £2 million potential income. Brent had and still has a successful scheme of integrated GCSEs within a Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) vocational framework. Of the students attending this course, approximately 40 per cent continue to take either A levels or BTEC National Diplomas, with Business and Finance being the most popular. But the bulk of these students were moving on to various neighbouring colleges out of the LEA. Having an integrated course already in place for CPVE led on, therefore, to the development of the LEA scheme for BTEC National as a means of retaining students, providing good quality education and training.

DEVELOPING THE SCHEME ACROSS THE AUTHORITY

The development of the BTEC National Diploma in Brent is interesting as it started in the schools with no college involvement. Obviously this had a few disadvantages - the scheme on offer had to be very tight, without the

range of options on offer which could, for example, be found in a college-based National Diploma course. After discussions with employers and marketing surveys across Brent, the range of options was identified for the two-year framework and after the submission to BTEC was approved, the BTEC National Diploma in Business and Finance began in September 1987 with four schools. A local further education (FE) college joined the scheme a year later together with several more schools bringing the total number of participating centres now to eight (seven schools and one college). With the joining of the college, the range of options on offer increased. The full course design is shown in **Figure 1**.

A common two-year programme is worked to across the schools and the FE college; they work to a common assignment programme; they use the same assessment methods and the same or similar schemes of work.

MANAGING THE SCHEME

The scheme is managed and co-ordinated by the scheme co-ordinator (the author). Each school (or college) is a centre. The larger centres have their own centre team, whereas the smaller schools are grouped together to share staff and resources. The LEA has a co-ordinating function, which includes ensuring quality control and equity across the scheme. To this end, there was set up within the scheme a formal pattern of meetings between the centres at different levels, for different purposes. Indeed, this was one of the criteria for BTEC validation.

The management structure for the scheme in each centre comprises a course team leader and a team comprised of core and option module staff. The course team leader is usually a head of business studies and can therefore report to the senior management team (e.g. deputy head, curriculum). In addition, teams were set up across the LEA from core and option module staff to develop the programmes of integrated assignments. As there was a shortfall of staff with relevant industrial/vocational experience, the team system was set up across the LEA to build in teachers and lecturers with suitable vocational, industrial and commercial experience. The frequent involvement of industry representatives to provide inputs to module teams ensures that the programme is work-related and has an employment focus.

Figure 1: BTEC National Diploma Business and Finance, course design

THE CORE ELEMENT YEAR 1		
Business related skills	Unit value	1
People in organisations	Unit value	1.5
Organisation in its environment	Unit value	1.5
Finance	Unit value	1.5
THE OPTION UNITS YEAR 1		
French or European studies	Unit value	1
Information processing	Unit value	1
Advertising	Unit value	1
THE CORE ELEMENT YEAR 2		
Business related skills	Unit value	1
People in organisations	Unit value	1.5
Organisation in its environment	Unit value	1.5
THE OPTION UNITS YEAR 2		
Secretarial services or accounts	Unit value	1
Marketing	Unit value	1
Business law	Unit value	1
Information processing	Unit value	1
TOTAL	Unit value	16.5

Managing the scheme has meant we have had to move away from some 'traditional' aspects of school life. Rather than organise the school day into small, discrete periods, large chunks of time have been allocated each day for care and option modules (see **Figure 2**). This timetable is common to all the centres, which has meant that emergency cover for tutor absence is much easier as there is always a possibility of students moving to another centre in the case of long-term absence. Also, the school students can attend the college for some of their options, if they wish. This gives students access to a far wider range of options.

Some senior management teams within schools found the idea of an extended school day and imposed fixed timetable difficult to accept. However, it was stressed to senior management that each BTEC module requires approximately 90 hours. This has been broken down into three hours a week, timetabled accordingly, and the common timetable is an important feature of the scheme, ensuring coherence and flexibility.

QUALITY CONTROL

We are duty bound to ensure that we maintain:

- procedures for quality control and coherence;
- standards between and across centres;
- clear channels of communication;
- accountability;
- a quality product;
- a partnership between all parties; and
- employer involvement.

In order to achieve these targets, a system of meetings across the LEA has been developed so that, for instance, every Tuesday all staff from the various module teams meet at the Brent Business Education Unit for two hours. This meetings system is part of the formal agreement between the centres and was of major importance in obtaining BTEC validation. As it is most unusual to have a BTEC National in the school sector across a number of schools, it had to be demonstrated that co-ordination and quality control could be maintained across several centres. This is why there is a common timetable, which is sacrosanct, and why the meetings structure is also organised on a fixed, timetabled basis. But there are clear bonuses from such an arrangement because the system of meetings allows staff from

Figure 2: BTEC National Diploma timetable year 1 (1990/91)

	9.00 am	10.30 am	12.00	The afternoon session (1 x 3 hours or 2 x 1.5 hours) will begin not earlier than 1.00 pm and not later than 3.00 pm
Monday	Organisation in its environment Core unit	Tutorial	Lunch	Finance Core unit
Tuesday	People in organisations Core unit			Students - local firms (Young Enterprise) Staff have meetings 3.00 - 5.00 pm (2.30 pm release)
Wednesday	Advertising Core option			Finance Core unit / Private study (Tutorial)
Thursday	French or European studies Core option			Organisation in its environment Core unit
Friday	Information processing Core option			People in organisations Core unit / Recreation (Private study)

schools and the college to exchange teaching ideas, formulate schemes of work for use with students, and involve employers. Thus the course teams develop assignments, moderate students' work across all centres and devise schemes of work for use within each centre. The LEA's role in this is an enabling and co-ordinating one.

In more detail, the various team meetings are as follows:

a) Centre Teams meet for two hours approximately every fourth week in their own centre. The aims are to:

- moderate assessment assignments;
- discuss student progress;
- ensure progression;
- discuss teaching, learning and assessment patterns;
- implement work experience;
- implement course review and evaluation; and
- discuss student entry.

A number of centres also have weekly timetabled meetings.

b) Module Teams meet every Tuesday for two hours in the Brent Business Education Unit to:

- design integrated assessment assignments;
- design schemes of work;
- moderate assignments;
- involve employers in the design and assessment of assignments; and
- integrate common skills.

c) Course Team Leaders meet approximately every fourth week for one hour in the Brent Business Education Unit to:

- discuss course design and structure;
- help plan in-service and staff development;
- moderate end of year assessment assignments; and
- ensure quality coherence.

In developing the above procedures to ensure quality, there has been a bonus in staff development terms in that all our teachers, and also our

college lecturers, can meet and exchange teaching and learning materials. It has also been possible to build in a programme of staff in-service training across the LEA. All staff teaching on the course do a two-week programme of work placement in industry organised by the Teacher Placement Service.

FINANCING

Brent has been very generous in supporting the BTEC National, with enhanced funding for BTEC National Students in the school sector. This has been as a pump priming exercise, and was essential to get the initiative off the ground. Financial support was also necessary because of factors such as BTEC modules taking schools beyond the length of their normal day, and the costs of staff time involved in the regular, formal meetings system.

In time this enhancement will probably be withdrawn, and the viability of courses will have to be maintained under Local Management of Schools (LMS) arrangements.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

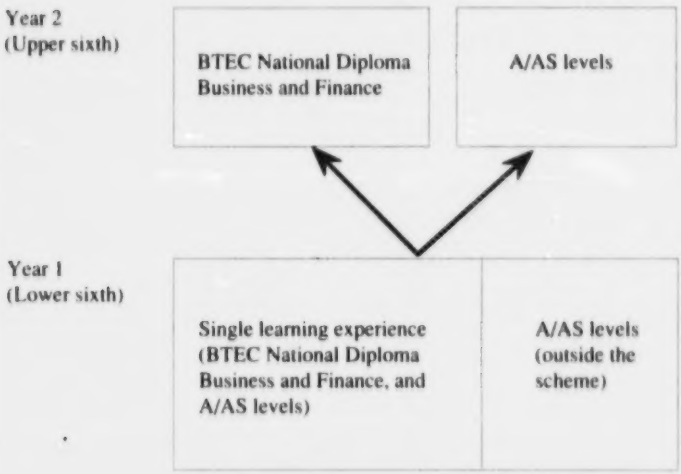
Working closely with a colleague from East Sussex and BTEC, a combined scheme for BTEC National Diploma in Business and Finance with three A levels (or two A levels/two AS levels) was developed. The pilot for this scheme started in September 1991, in East Sussex, Brent and a city technology college (CTC).

Colleagues from Brent, East Sussex and the CTC have mapped and matched a number of A and AS levels within BTEC module units. It is also possible for students to choose A and AS level outside the scheme, from the range offered by the particular school. Another feature is the integration of Information Processing across the core units, and the addition of European studies which also delivers the language (French) module.

At the end of the first year students choose whether to go down the A level/AS level route to complete these qualifications or take the BTEC National Diploma route. The student who then chooses the BTEC route will have already accumulated half the modules needed for the Diploma (as well as half an A level entitlement). The A or AS level student also has this credit

and can carry these modules with them and add to them at a later date in order to complete a full BTEC Diploma should he/she wish to. This is known as the 'Y' model (see **Figures 3** and **4**), and delays choice for students until the end of their first year in the sixth form.

Figure 3: The 'Y' model



The philosophy behind this is that from a single learning experience, a range of outcomes is possible (see **Figure 5**). The choice advantages for the students are obviously considerable with such a combined scheme. A and AS subjects that are being offered in this combined first year are business studies, sociology, general studies, economics, accounts, French, government and politics, computer studies, communication studies and media studies.

In developing this scheme, aware of the difficulties posed by combining two such different routes, we had to be particularly careful not to distort BTEC teaching and learning strategies. The relevant A and AS levels have been matched in to BTEC core modules.

Figure 4: Overall two-year approach

At the end of the A/AS levels students will be able to complete a Certificate or Diploma in Business and Finance if they wish.

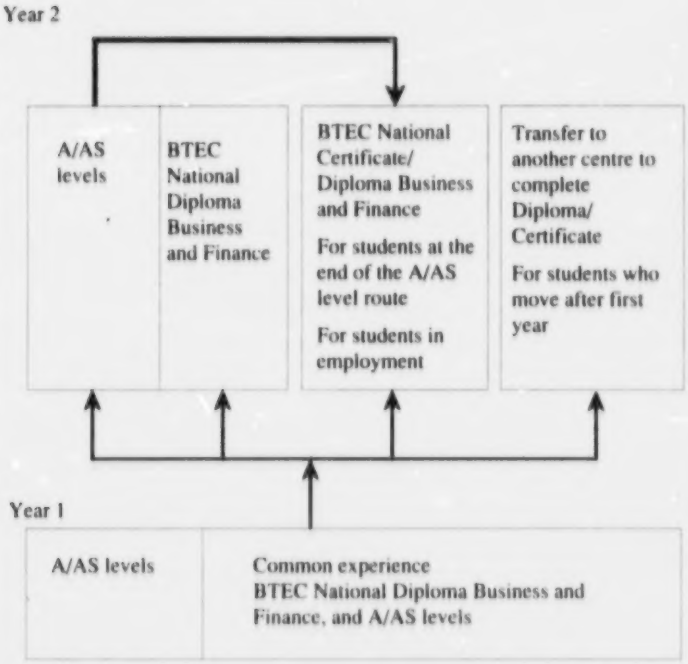
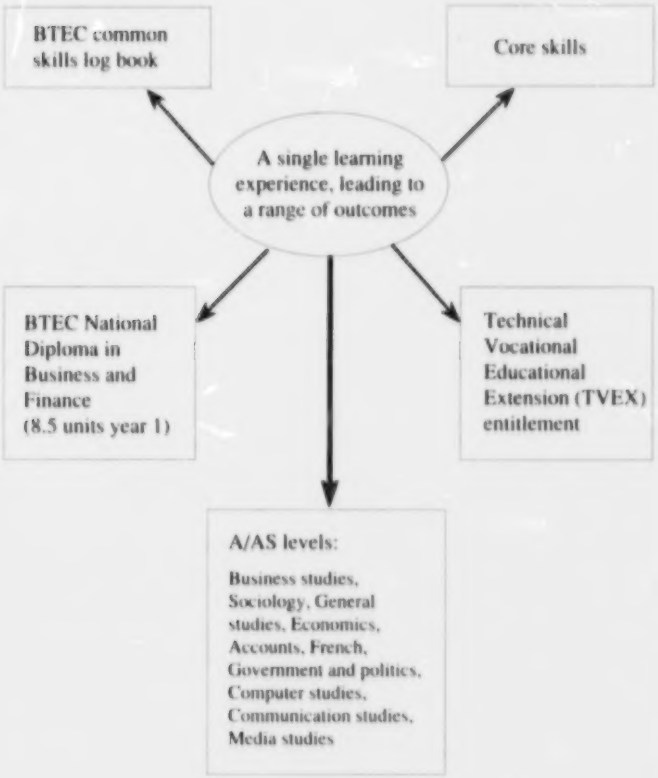

Year 2
A/AS levels
BTEC National Diploma Business and Finance
BTEC National Certificate/ Diploma Business and Finance
For students at the end of the A/AS level route
For students in employment
Transfer to another centre to complete Diploma/ Certificate
For students who move after first year
Year 1
A/AS levels
Common experience
BTEC National Diploma Business and Finance, and A/AS levels

Figure 5: A single learning experience

BTEC National Diploma in Business and Finance, and A/AS levels


BTEC common skills log book
Core skills
A single learning experience, leading to a range of outcomes
BTEC National Diploma in Business and Finance (8.5 units year 1)
Technical Vocational Educational Extension (TVEX) entitlement
A/AS levels:
Business studies, Sociology, General studies, Economics, Accounts, French, Government and politics, Computer studies, Communication studies, Media studies

CONCLUSION

Developing a common, authority-wide BTEC course in schools and an FE college has not been without its problems but the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. The advantages are:

- establishing firm progression routes;
- broadening the spectrum of work for staff;
- sharing quality control procedures;
- partnerships with industry, business and commerce;
- sharing the design of assessment assignments;
- sharing the industrial/business expertise amongst staff;
- improving the physical resources;
- updating and renewal of resources;
- improving staff retention and recruitment;
- on-going staff development;
- sharing teaching staff where deficiencies occur;
- common induction for all students and staff;
- on-going staff work placements;
- updating teaching, learning and assessment processes;
- developing a student-centred negotiated approach to learning; and
- profiling and records of achievement.

The disadvantages are:

- co-ordination across the centres;
- the ability to ensure that the course is employment led;
- planning and developing new support materials;
- the danger that the course might become assignment driven;
- quality of the staff;
- producing and distributing the assessment assignments; and
- moderation of assessment assignments.

BTEC IN SCHOOLS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND FE

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INTRODUCTION

Preston Manor High School is one of the schools in Brent Local Education Authority (LEA) offering Business and Technology Education (BTEC) National Diploma courses - one of eight participating centres throughout Brent. For a fuller description of this scheme, see the chapter by Barbara Molog.

This chapter looks at franchising between schools and further education (FE) colleges, and examines some of the issues involved.

PRESTON MANOR HIGH SCHOOL

Preston Manor is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive with over 1150 students, including over 230 in the sixth form. It is an expanding school, partly due to its increased staying-on rates over the last few years - it is growing from the bottom (more intakes) and retaining at the top. The staying-on rate from the fifth year is 70 per cent. This high staying-on rate can be partly related to confidence regarding the qualities of the school and examination success at 16, and partly to the course provision post-16. This provision includes a BTEC National Diploma, 22 A levels offered and a GCSE/Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) course. The staying-on rate from this latter one-year sixth form course can frequently be as high as half. Since the

BTEC National Diploma was introduced, take up of the course has been promising with a group of 16 in 1991/92 and the possibility of two groups next year. This course has been a great success in providing a new route to higher education (HE) within school. Progression is good with 90 per cent going into HE in 1991/92.

COLLABORATION OR COMPETITION?

One of the first questions to be posed is 'do FE colleges see the school sector as a potential market or as a competitor?' From the above description it would be easy to view BTEC National school-based developments as competition. Certainly such courses have been viewed in the past as the preserve of the FE sector but this picture is beginning to change, opening up new opportunities and the development of new relationships. The question of future relationships between colleges and schools is tied up with the underlying theme of strategic planning in the post-16 sector. FE clearly must play a major role in any future developments, and given current concerns about the need to raise participation rates and develop post-16 education in order to improve on Britain's under-performance record, there should be no problem about competition in an expanding market.

But there is at present a dilemma about co-operation and collaboration between the school and FE sectors on the one hand, and competition and commercialism on the other. Why do they have to be two poles? Why cannot we manage the benefits of co-operation, collaboration and joint schemes implicit in franchising developments? The challenge is to manage the best of both worlds in providing a coherent post-16 sector. The result could be a very mixed model existing in both urban and rural areas of the country.

Taking the specific example of Brent, the BTEC initiative came from the school sector after market research showed the potential. The BTEC Business and Finance National Diploma was a small development in the local area until the secondary schools took it up. Subsequently, the student numbers have grown dramatically with in excess of 150 school-based students, and student numbers in the FE college more than tripling. In the Brent experience both sectors have gained, with the students benefiting from additional provision. The collaborative effort in course material design has also been beneficial.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND FE

In the rapidly changing educational scene, the relationships between sectors will inevitably be modified. The delegation of budgets to schools, with the introduction of Local Management of Schools (LMS) could have a considerable impact on the relationship between schools and FE colleges. For instance, in the financial year 1991/92, Preston Manor's budget is £2.7 million (in the second year of delegation). This gives an ability to buy, but the question is whether or not the school is willing to buy: quality and affordability are major concerns. To date in Brent there has been financial enhancement to assist in the running of the BTEC course. It has been worth it because of the net benefit to the authority of the retention of students in the post-16 sector. But within LMS, the justification of a differential funding of post-16 students in the school sector becomes more difficult, and it will probably go. In general terms, BTEC National courses in Brent have proved more expensive to run than more traditional courses, particularly if you add in the costs of scheduled weekly scheme meetings. This is not an unexpected observation. However, taking into account group numbers, it has been a cost-effective course provision at Preston Manor.

From the FE standpoint, are schools increasingly to be seen as a market, and does FE have a marketable product? This does not just mean the courses themselves, but also learning materials and management skills in relation to setting up and running e.g. BTEC National courses. Schools may be interested in providing BTEC courses, but FE is the sector with the experience and expertise. Clearly, the schools are never going to match the range of courses provided by FE. There should be an expansion of co-operation and franchising agreements because of the potential benefits on all sides. But if FE does not take the lead at secondary school level, the BTEC developments will take place there anyway. There is the obvious role for FE to provide the courses, as currently happens, but there is an additional role as that of co-ordinator or overall manager in a franchising arrangement to a whole range of schools, perhaps as an adaptation of the Brent LEA model.

BTEC COURSES - SCHOOL LEVEL IMPLICATIONS

Schools embarking on BTEC courses have huge organisational problems to overcome when starting from scratch. These include:

- student recruitment;
- entry requirements;
- course publicity;
- the induction process;
- curriculum;
- links with industry;
- resources;
- staffing structures and recruitment;
- timetabling; and
- assessment.

In the development of the BTEC National within the school context at Preston Manor, the first four of these considerations proved quite easy to organise. Progression from the one-year sixth form course with its mainly business oriented pre-vocational characteristics and its mix of GCSE, Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and CPVE qualifications was easy to establish. These students provide the principle recruitment areas. Entry requirements to fit with BTEC guidelines were established and an entry grid for mixed qualifications agreed locally. Publicity and induction programmes were developed within the context of existing patterns.

Staffing, industrial links and resource development proved more demanding and challenging. The collaborative approach between centres, and in particular our paired consortium partner, helped us initially in each of these areas. The weekly meetings between centres were critical for assignment and assessment design. Without the additional funding provided by the LEA, it is difficult to see how the development could have reached this stage. An advantage in Brent was the short distances between centres.

If the BTEC course offered had been in science, technology or engineering, the logistics problems would have been enormous, both in terms of physical resources and staffing resources. But for Business and Finance, it was feasible. Despite a background of financial cuts and staff reduction, staffing in the business studies department has been increased. It has been a question of reallocation of resources to priority areas - drawing, for instance, on the untapped experience of staff to expand business education to fulfil the considerable latent demand that was there. A huge amount of development work was also done to build in strong links with industry. This has led to a wide number of manufacturing and service industries making an active contribution to course and assignment design as well as to delivery, with visits, talks, Young Enterprise, work experience and assessment.

One area with complications and staff management implications was the introduction of block timetabling. As part of the scheme, Preston Manor had to fit in with the standard block timetabling as laid down by the LEA as co-ordinator of the Brent scheme. This was something of a culture shock, including the notion of timetabled hours extending beyond the normal school day. But in the interests of quality delivery, the view was taken that the standard, block timetable was essential.

Despite the challenges, the benefits of the introduction of the scheme have been wide-ranging. They include new and worthwhile course opportunities, better student progression, increased student retention, extended links with industry, and staff development.

SO WHY FRANCHISE?

What do both parties hope to gain from any franchising arrangements? For the franchisee, there is a wide range of possible gains, including access to a worthwhile and existing programme, the saving of time in design and introduction of courses, as well as support with introduction, advice on implementation and the sharing of quality assurance aspects. Increased student recruitment is one obvious benefit, especially with income being related to student numbers. There is also the matter of improved resourcing and possible financial gain (though given the costs, the latter is unlikely).

With the advent of LMS, schools now have the opportunity to buy in courses from FE colleges. In this case the college would act as the franchisee. If colleges are to sell their expertise, skills in franchising, facilities, learning resources etc., to the secondary sector, then quality is a key issue because the consumer now has a choice, but a limited budget. There is also the possibility that a school, as a BTEC approved centre, might wish to set up a franchising arrangement. LMS in schools has brought them into the realm of income generation - familiar enough in FE, but a new ethos for schoolteachers. The use of buildings, time, capital and staff can all be considered in terms of maximisation of resources.

FRANCHISING ARRANGEMENTS

There are various models possible, set out in a clear-cut way by BTEC in **Franchising: a guide to partnerships in programme delivery**.

If you are an approved centre, you can franchise BTEC courses to a non-approved centre; you can act as the franchiser with other centres as the franchisees. But it lays many responsibilities at the door of the franchiser.

Commonly, the school would be the franchisee to the FE college's franchiser. The FE college could also co-ordinate a scheme across several centres, whilst retaining responsibility for quality control, as is done by the LEA in the Brent scheme.

In the case of Brent, the FE college is one of the providers along with the schools. In such an arrangement, there can be a mixed model with the college providing e.g. BTEC First units and the school running GCSE. For BTEC National provision, there could be a combination of joint operations, such as FE-assisted optional units in a school-based programme, with centralised management and quality assurance. The mixed model could comprise a partnership aspect within an overall franchising arrangement.

It would also be possible for the FE college to be the client with a school as the franchiser buying in units where required, though this is clearly an unlikely prospect. However, in the new era the school acting as a franchiser for other schools is a distinct possibility.

Obviously there are many issues to be addressed in terms of resource management, strategic planning, curriculum, and inevitably, affordability (especially in the school sector) when setting up franchising arrangements. Developments in BTEC course provision open up many opportunities. Franchising on a larger scale has many advantages to franchiser and franchisee and will be an increasingly important part of future relations between FE colleges and schools.

REFERENCE

Business and Technician Education Council (1991) **Franchising: a guide to partnerships in programme delivery.** BTEC

FRANCHISING HIGHER EDUCATION ACTIVITY AT POLYTECHNIC SOUTH WEST

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BACKGROUND

Polytechnic South West is the largest higher education (HE) institution in the southwest of England. It serves a mainly semi-rural area with no one large industrial base and its range of provision is wide. The poor communications and geographically large area of this region mean that access to higher education has never been easy in the southwest. To extend higher education provision, Polytechnic South West has been looking at ways in which they can work in partnership with, predominantly, further education (FE) colleges. This, then, is how the franchising activity at the Polytechnic has come about.

The polytechnic franchises to nine colleges in Devon, Somerset and Cornwall, and also has franchise links with the FE college in Jersey and is developing links with the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth. In 1991/92 under these franchising arrangements over 1,500 students will be enrolled on over 30 courses covering a very wide range of programmes. Some are existing, well-established courses; some are new programmes developed within particular colleges; and existing Polytechnic courses are also licensed out to colleges.

FRANCHISING ACTIVITY

The Polytechnic has three types of franchising activity.

Franchising the first years of a degree course

Here, the Polytechnic subcontracts to further education colleges the early stages of established degree programmes. Examples of this include the modular Combined Honours programme in science, social science and humanities and the foundation stage of the extended engineering degree.

This activity has several advantages:

— it widens accessibility to degree level courses and encourages non-traditionally qualified students to enter higher education via, for example, locally-based access courses;

— as local provision it lessens the 'culture-shock' that can be experienced in a non-traditional student's first year of degree level study by enabling that year to take place in a relatively small, known, environment;

— it cuts down travelling time; and

— it enables students to receive the initial stages of their course in smaller groups - an especially important factor for non-traditional students, such as adult returners. The colleges can provide exceedingly good and appropriate education for this stage of study.

The student starts off in a local college and then proceeds onwards to the Polytechnic for the later stages of his/her course. Why doesn't the student stay in the college for the whole course? To run a degree course requires a considerable infrastructure - library provision, specialist labs or facilities, staff expertise etc. which will probably not be available in the FE college.

Joint provision courses

This is the second type of franchising activity - joint provision of new degree and Higher National Diploma (HND) courses. Such joint provision, by a process of 'academic synergy' allows, in effect, a pooling of resources - staff, facilities, expertise - to enable a new course to be offered that neither college nor polytechnic could offer independently, especially in a period when resources, including staff recruitment, are limited. Examples of this

type of provision are an HND in Construction Studies (in conjunction with South Devon College), and a BSc in Hospitality Management (in conjunction with South Devon College and Plymouth College of FE).

Management and oversight of higher education courses

The third type of franchising arrangement the Polytechnic operates is managing and overseeing existing higher education courses taking place wholly in further education colleges. Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC) funding for higher education courses in further education colleges is at present usually channelled through the Local Education Authority (LEA). It is the LEA which makes the bid to PCFC and receives the money which it then passes on to the college. The Polytechnic has, in effect, taken over the LEA's role here, in bidding to PCFC for these existing HND courses. The money is incorporated into the core of the Polytechnic's general PCFC funding, which provides some financial safeguards for the higher education sector within FE colleges.

An advantage of this kind of provision is that it enables the Polytechnic and its partners to explore ways in which existing HNDs can provide progression on to degree courses, such as has been done at Somerset College of Arts and Technology to convert an HND into a degree programme. Another advantage of this type of franchise is that the Polytechnic, as a major higher education provider, can ensure quality control in the college.

DEVELOPING A NEW FRANCHISE

There are three stages in the development of any new franchise.

Stage one

The first stage is informal and involves discussions between the Polytechnic and the colleges to establish:

— existing institutional strengths, matching them to the Polytechnic's expertise;

— the market and demand (local, regional, national); and

— ways in which to build on and develop existing strengths in the further education college.

Stage two

This stage builds on the ideas arising from stage one and develops them into more detailed formulations. For example, this would include:

— discussing proposed developments with appropriate academic staff;

— identifying teaching and learning strategies, resource requirements, marketing strategies and discussing viability and potential problem areas;

— bidding to PCFC or other funding body - e.g. local Training and Enterprise Council (TEC); and

— development of contracts and validation documentation.

Stage three

This is the final, formal stage and would include:

— (for an existing Polytechnic course) formal validation of a proposal with the involvement of the Polytechnic Registry. This is a single event as there will be an existing set of assessment regulations, syllabi, examination boards etc., and the validation procedure concentrates on college staffing, teaching and learning strategies, resources, staff development and internal quality control procedures. Approval may be granted, with conditions and/or recommendations as appropriate.

— (for a new course) following the general Polytechnic procedure of a two-part validation, covering all aspects of the proposal. The Polytechnic has full delegated powers from the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA). For Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses a joint validation process is carried out in-house. Approval may be granted with conditions and/or recommendations.

Once validated, all franchised courses are subject to periodic progress reviews, in addition to the requirement to submit an annual course review.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

1. Polytechnic provides the prospectus and Polytechnics and Colleges Admissions System/Art and Design Registration (PCAS/ADR) entries for franchised courses.

2. Polytechnic acts as a clearing house for PCAS/ADR applications and passes them to college for decisions.

3. Students are jointly registered by college and Polytechnic.

4. Polytechnic collects the fees on behalf of colleges from the LEAs and transmits these, plus PCFC funds (including an allocation for capital funding) to colleges.

5. Students have access to Polytechnic libraries and certain other facilities, but colleges are expected to provide all necessary and general resources to operate the programme. College may contract separately with the Polytechnic for teaching input from Polytechnic staff.

6. Quality control, which is taken extremely seriously, takes place in a number of stages by representation of Polytechnic staff on college course committees and by college representation on corresponding Polytechnic course committees. Annual course review receives consideration firstly by internal college procedure, and then by the Polytechnic's internal consideration process. Considerable stress is placed upon these annual course review procedures.

7. Students take Polytechnic exams and follow similar assessments and are considered at Polytechnic exam boards, to ensure comparability of assessment between internal Polytechnic students and those from the franchise college.

COSTS

It is worth pointing out that franchising is not a way of making money. Clearly the Polytechnic tries to cover its costs but that is all - there is not the level of resourcing available to allow franchiser or franchisee to make a profit.

The Polytechnic bids to the PCFC on the college's behalf and then passes this funding, together with the fees for the full-time students, to the college. The colleges are responsible for collecting the part-time student fees themselves. The Polytechnic retains a small service fee per student. From this money the Polytechnic has to cover its costs on general management and oversight of the courses, registry costs, student registration, validation, and academic liaison (attending committee meetings). The college also benefits from capital purchases, made on its behalf by the Polytechnic, for each franchised course.

If there is little financial profit in this venture, why do Polytechnic South West and others continue to do it? The main reasons are that franchising extends access to higher education, extends provision and (for the colleges) safeguards funding, and hence safeguards and extends a rich and varied higher education course provision for the region.

HIGHER EDUCATION FRANCHISING AT SOMERSET COLLEGE OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

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Somerset College of Arts and Technology

BACKGROUND

Somerset College of Arts and Technology (SCAT) in Taunton has over 3,000 full-time equivalent students (FTEs) and around 280 FTE teaching staff. It is a large further education (FE) college, serving the local area. There is no higher education (HE) college in Somerset so that SCAT has always undertaken some work in that sector, primarily in art and design, with about 17 per cent of the student population on HE courses.

SCAT works in association with Polytechnic South West (PSW) to provide a range of courses (see also the chapter by Ian Tunbridge). The relationship between SCAT and the Polytechnic goes back some 10 years, and began with a regional part-time Cert. Ed. (FE), and an Access course, and was built up from that base. Franchising and HE work is still only a comparatively small part of the College's provision, but the arrangements with PSW have enabled SCAT to extend its range of higher education courses and convert an established Higher National Diploma (HND) into a degree course, starting from September 1991.

HIGHER EDUCATION PROVISION AT SCAT

Provision comprises the following:

— HND Graphics (full-time);
— HND Textiles (full-time) (BA from September 1991);

- Cert. Ed. (FE) (part-time);
- Youth and Community Diploma (part-time);
- First year BSc Extended Engineering (full-time) (from 1990);
- Combined Honours Modules (part-time) (from 1990);
- Higher National Certificates (HNCs) in Business, Construction, Engineering, Social Care (part-time), Higher Diploma in Administrative Procedures (full-time); and
- Access to HE (full-time and part-time) with a core and range of vocational options.

The two HND courses were well established, but the movement and feasibility to make HND Textiles into a degree course came about due to the franchising developments with Polytechnic South West. It has been of mutual advantage; PSW were looking to add this type of provision to their portfolio, and this gave SCAT the opportunity to go ahead.

The Access courses are not in themselves higher education, but are a link with the Polytechnic and a feed-on to HE for many students. There are now around 140 Access students, mostly full-time. Around 50 per cent carry on to HE courses.

The Access course offers a strong core with options leading to vocational areas. It was never envisaged that all the students would want to progress to HE, though some realise their further potential for continuation during the Access course. They are multi-exit courses, i.e. not tied specifically or exclusively to PSW, though many students obviously continue into HE at the Polytechnic.

The first year BSc Extended Engineering course has grown directly out of the Access course in Science and Technology. The advantages to students are that it gives them mandatory grants and the course has more status. The link is as a four-year course with the first year at SCAT with students moving on for the remaining three years to PSW (or to use the credits elsewhere). There is a mixed entry to the course, including those without formal qualifications, with a diagnostic term prior to the main part of the course.

What this course demonstrates is that although a college like SCAT does not have the full range of resources for higher level work, it does have

certain specialist areas, meeting the needs of local industry. Some of these are outstandingly good, and certainly good enough for first year degree level work, as has been proved in validation with the Polytechnic to do this work. Moreover, the course is proving a great success in enabling students to succeed at degree level work.

The Combined Honours Modules programme has not as yet proved so successful. This provision also grew out of an Access course to give people a chance to study degree level work part-time (two days a week), and that has been the problem. Financing of part-time work is so difficult, forcing committed, capable people to drop out. This is a crucial problem for adult returners. From 1991 a full-time route has been developed and has recruited successfully.

From our range of HNCs, discussions are taking place with the Polytechnic regarding development as potential HNDs.

THE REASONS FOR FRANCHISING AT SCAT

There was an anxiety when the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC) was set up that all the higher education provision might become concentrated in those institutions. Somerset College of Arts and Technology was keen to maintain and develop HE provision, which the franchise pattern in the southwest has enabled us to do.

Although as a college we have enjoyed good relations with our Local Education Authority (LEA), we were worried about their power to bid and negotiate for HE funding with such provision as there was being scattered over colleges in Somerset. In addition, the funding for full-time courses was always for far smaller numbers than we in fact recruited, so that we were underfunded in effect. But by going via the Polytechnic route, we can now actually bid much more realistically through their system for the actual numbers we wish to recruit. There are real benefits to be gained from being part of a polytechnic strategic plan as opposed to an isolated, minority provision.

When Plymouth Polytechnic changed its name to Polytechnic South West, this was a signal demonstrating their deliberate strategy of developing a regional polytechnic, with bases and outposts building up a regional network throughout the southwest. SCAT's initial relationship with the

Polytechnic had already been building up over the years, so that it was a logical extension to become part of that network as an 'associated college'.

In summary, we felt that our HE work would be more secure in working with the Polytechnic than trying to stand on our own with the LEA.

SPECIFIC BENEFITS

These include:

- local student access;
- security of financing re student numbers;
- access to capital allocation (Polytechnic enrolled students) for HE courses;
- staff motivation;
- further developments via Polytechnic South West validation; and
- mutual advantages for both Polytechnic and College.

The direction taken so far has been fairly modest, but it has been of benefit to the local students, the staff and the College as well as to the Polytechnic. We are working together realistically; SCAT is not attempting to become an HE college as such. The aim is to maintain a balance between serving the needs of the local community, as well as providing that community's higher level needs to which we also recruit regionally and nationally.

SPECIFIC CONCERNS

These include:

- dependence on Polytechnic management and planning;
- academic control: relationship with academic boards, quality systems, staffing;
- tensions of FE and HE demands within limited accommodation and resources;
- levels of funding and additional costs;
- total balance of SCAT as a local college serving the community and as a centre for HE; and
- realism of aims.

Being aware of the above concerns and areas of tension, we are striving hard to maintain the necessary balances. Although we are working with the Polytechnic, there is no danger of our becoming merely a Polytechnic department - HE is too small a part of the overall college provision for that to happen. We maintain academic control of the courses, which we must do, given our links with the Polytechnic and the necessity to comply with quality controls, exam boards etc. The two-way flow of information is most important in this respect. It also helps to maintain the relationship as a partnership.

It is equally essential to maintain the balance between FE and HE provision within the college in terms of demands, resourcing and status; higher education cannot be allowed to be seen as the 'cream'. This balance and a realism of aims must be considered in any strategic planning for the future.

The advantages of franchising outweigh the disadvantages, and we intend that there will continue to be modest growth and further developments, including possible links with other institutions.

FRANCHISING: SOME ISSUES AND CONCERNS

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After the presentations on the various examples of franchising schemes, the seminar concluded with a general discussion on some of the issues, contradictions and concerns important in considering franchising arrangements, along with problems still to be resolved with future developments. The following is a short summary of this discussion.

In considering the merits and demerits of franchising arrangements, the following should be borne in mind:

- the purposes and benefits: does everyone gain?
- structure and progression: is this free or tied, and can credit transfer work?
- funding matters: contracts, fees, capital, grants, costs;
- quality: validation, oversight, teaching, support, plant, environment, the 'student experience'; and
- bureaucracy: committees, meetings, records.

While it is generally agreed that there are good reasons for franchising and major benefits to be gained, it cannot be assumed that the situation will always be one in which everybody wins. If the matching between a college and a polytechnic or between colleges and schools suits the interests of the institutions concerned, does it also meet the best interests of the individual student?

Many of the structures and franchising arrangements are tied in the sense that a polytechnic branches down to a number of colleges, and/or the college branches down to a number of schools. Although franchisers are at pains to point out that their franchisees are not legally or exclusively tied to them alone, in practice the franchisees are unlikely to make additional arrangements elsewhere. This may not be to the best advantage of either franchisee or students.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

In all the debate and discussion about the convenience and advantage of franchising agreements, the subject that attracts the least attention is that of the nature and quality of 'the student experience'. All the questions of validation agreements, teaching strategy, quality, college environment, student support and so forth naturally impinge upon this topic. But very little attention is focused directly on the nature of the student experience as a result of the franchising arrangements in place, or how this might affect future developments. Yet consideration of all aspects of the student experience should be fundamental to the planning of a course. And can there be said to be a minimum level of student experience?

It is accepted that education at higher education (HE) level is not merely about the acquisition of knowledge and skills; there is that recognisable but intangible, indefinable 'cultural' aspect as well. Do the younger age groups taking HE courses in a further education college obtain the breadth of experience, both cultural and social, that they would from an HE institution? For that matter, do students undertaking vocational training in schools miss out on the breadth of experience they would obtain at a further education college?

Conversely, one of the purposes of broadening provision of higher education into further education (FE) institutions is to give local access for those otherwise unable to gain entry to such courses - those in remoter rural communities, adult returners etc. Here it is a question of choice, and if those people have no other choice, then the providers have the responsibility for the quality of their experience. For groups such as adult returners, single parents and mature students, access and ability to obtain training and qualification are far more important concerns than cultural and social issues - they have the motivation, it is the opportunity they require. It is also to their advantage that FE colleges can try to ensure a stimulating

learning environment in smaller groups than is possible in many higher education institutions.

It is essential therefore to try and provide an **appropriate** experience and programme of study for all types of student. This includes matching expectations with reality. If, for example, a college in making franchising arrangements with schools has as one outcome the fact that students who opted to go to college rather than stay on at school find themselves having to go back to school for their course due to institutional expediency, then those students cannot be said to be the gainers from such arrangements. But on the other hand, one of the benefits of franchising FE work into schools includes the opportunity for those who choose to stay on at school a greater choice of vocational courses. Maintaining the balance is bound to be a difficult task, but vitally important.

To facilitate matters, it is possible to steer recruitment on to courses to take account of the appropriate age group, background etc. This should not lead to rigid entry requirements regarding age or qualifications, but is rather a question of targeting, for instance of appropriate access courses to non-traditional groups of students, or Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) primarily to 18 year olds.

Part of the overall higher education experience includes the range of facilities as well as activities, and the physical environment of the college. It is not impossible for further education colleges to improve in all these areas, but they have been starved of investment for so long that the necessary resourcing would require a huge cash investment.

The danger to be avoided is that of using franchising arrangements with FE colleges as a means of providing higher education on the cheap, to be seen inevitably as lower standard qualifications. To take the example of HND courses; within polytechnics they have been regarded as low status qualifications, whereas in FE colleges they can be the 'jewel in the crown'. In practice this would tend to mean that the FE college students actually have the better educational experience - they are big fish in a small pond as opposed to small fish in a large pond. If FE colleges were well resourced, this would be even more the case.

Taking this point into the school sector, with the traditional academic bias, the arrival of, say, Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses in schools is not necessarily going to be heralded as jewel-like. But

status is only one problem in providing vocational opportunities in schools. Far more difficult are the resourcing and staffing implications. It follows, however, that if good quality vocational education can be established in schools, the demand for it will increase.

STAFF EXPERIENCE

Equally relevant is the necessity for ensuring that the staff delivering HE in franchised colleges, or vocational courses in schools, have the appropriate experience and ability. Concerns have been raised not only about the suitability of background of staff but also about the necessity for teaching staff to maintain the up-to-dateness of their knowledge and research, and contacts with industry and commerce. Franchising arrangements are likely to act as a stimulus and impetus for such renewal and liaison activity to take place. Also on the plus side, the opportunity to take on teaching in new areas and with new, more flexible methods is generally a motivating force for staff.

When contracts are drawn up for validation procedures, details of the main staff for the teaching programme should be included, and at annual course review, any substantial changes in staffing notified. It should not be possible to achieve validation by naming an appropriate, experienced group of teaching staff, then during the delivery of the course shifting the teaching work to other, less suitable staff members.

The teaching methods must also be appropriate for the types of courses and the new categories of students to be recruited. This is likely to mean an increase in flexible learning strategies, open learning centres and other such developments.

PROGRESSION AND CREDIT TRANSFER

For multi-exit progression and Credit Accumulation Transfer (CAT) schemes to work requires an enormous amount of student support and counselling, including guidance and action planning right from the start.

The counselling must be provided throughout a student's progression as he/she moves from institution to institution. As more and more students are going to be working through with Records of Achievement (RoA),

Individual Development Plans (IDPs), flexible learning programmes and so forth, they will have an expectation of counselling and route planning, as is more the case in America. The problem of funding for such intensive guidance and counselling in a system of credit accumulation with greater flexibility as to course method and delivery, coupled with greater freedom of movement between institutions, is a matter that needs to be resolved.

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